some who would fain write in Greek and Latin, and who are not even able to speak French well. When Juvenal, satiric poet, said:—

Omnia græce
Quum sit deterius multo nescire latine,*—

* *Satires*, VI, 187.[25]

he reproved those Romans who chose to speak in Greek rather than in Latin. Aulus Gellius, a polished author, in chapter VIII of the eleventh book of his *Noctes Atticæ*,† says that Marcus Cato once derided and rebuked a noble Roman called Aulus Albinus, who had once been Consul, because, being a Roman, he wrote a history in Greek, and at the beginning thereof, begged to be forgiven if he should go astray in his Greek. It seems to me, under correction, that it would be much better for a Frenchman to write in French than in another language, as well for the correctness of his writing, as to give lustre to his nation & enrich his native tongue, which is as fair & fine as any other when it is well set down in writing. If we would use Greek or Latin, let us use them only in quotations from others, as Aulus Gellius and Macrobius do, and a thousand other good Latin authors, who often quote Greek in their Latin text, & let us write the chief of our text in good French. When I see a Frenchman write in Greek or in Latin, I seem to see a mason clad in the garb of a Philosopher or King who would fain recite a play on the stage of the Basoche, or in the Brotherhood of the Trinity, & who cannot pronounce clearly enough, as if his tongue were too thick, nor carry himself well, nor walk fittingly, inasmuch as his feet and legs are unused to walk like a Philosopher or King.

† *Quoted by Gellius from Cornelius Nepos.*

IMagine a Frenchman clad in the native garb of a Lombard, which is oftenest of blue cloth or sacking—methinks that that Frenchman would hardly enjoy himself at his ease without very soon slashing it & taking from it its true shape of a Lombard gown, which is not ordinarily slashed, for Lombards do not often deface their property to excess. I leave all this to the wise discretion of scholars, & I shall not encumber myself with Greek or Latin, except to quote them in due time & place, or to speak therein with those who may not know French, or knowing it, do not choose to speak it.

SO I return to my subject, & say that amongst Attic letters, which are in number twenty-three, that is to say, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, V, X, Y, & Z,‡ there are some which are broader than the others. For some of them are eleven points in breadth,

‡ *It will be remembered that the distinction between* I *and* J, *and between* U *and* V, *was not recognized until about the year* 1600; W (*double* V *or* U) *has even now no place in the French alphabet, and is found only in a few words recently borrowed from other languages.*

making ten units, as A, D, H, K, O, Q (without the tail), R, V, X, & Y; & these are as broad as they are high; that is to say, they are contained & drawn in an equilateral plane, divided, as I have said above, by eleven perpendicular lines and other eleven horizontal lines of equal length. I, which is our standard and most important letter in making all the others in their due proportions, is but three units broad at the top and three whole ones and two halves at the foot. A, D, H, K, O, Q (without the tail), R, V, X, Y, and Z are as broad as they are high—that is to say, ten units. M is thirteen units broad, which means that it has three units more of breadth than of height. N is eleven units broad; G, nine and a half; T, eight whole ones and two halves; C, nine whole ones; B, seven; E and L, seven and a half; P, seven whole ones; F, six whole ones; S, six less one fourth. The tail of the Q is four units high, and thirteen long.

THis letter Q is the only one of all the letters that goes below the lowest line, & I have never been able to find a man who could tell me the reason therefor; but I will tell it & set it down in writing. I have thought & meditated so much on the shape of these Attic letters that I have discovered that the Q extends below the line because he does not allow himself to be written in a complete word without his trusty comrade & brother V (U), and to show that he wishes always to have him by his side, he embraces him with his tail from below, as I shall draw him hereafter, in his turn. Q is to be sure, sometimes placed alone, as an abbreviation, when it stands for Quintus, or Quintius, or some other like proper name of a man—or of a woman, as Quinta, or Quintia; and in that case, for a woman's name, it must be turned thus, Ꝙ; as the C is turned, Ↄ, when it stands for Caia. But, as I have said, in writing words at length, with all their letters, it always demands & joins to itself the said V; as we see in these words: Quot, quotus, quoties, quando, aliquando, quatuor, quinque, quinquaginta, and numberless other like words, not in Latin alone, but in French; as who should say quant, qui esset, c'est quelcun, c'est Quentin de la rue de Quiquempoit. Priscian, an author of great repute in olden times, says in his first book,* wherein he treats of the qualities of letters, that Q must always be followed by V to show that the said V loses its force & its sound when written before a vowel in the same syllable; but he does not say why it has a tail below the line of all the other letters. However, I forgive him; for he does not teach how to write logically or by measure, but only the proper position

* *Chapter* IV.

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